BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **The number of employment insurance (EI) recipients receiving regular benefits in British Columbia decreased 0.4% between August and September, to 69,820.** Nationally, the number of recipients was virtually unchanged, edging down 0.1% to 564,720. Most provinces posted declines (ranging from 0.4% in BC to 4.1% in PEI). The exceptions were the three prairie provinces and the north. The number of EI beneficiaries rose only moderately in Saskatchewan (+1.1%) and Manitoba (+1.6%), but was up sharply in Alberta (+9.3%), where 33,950 people were receiving benefits in September. In the territories, the number of EI recipients increased by about 6%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Self-Employment

- **Almost all of Canada's employment growth during the period since 1989 was attributable to self-employment, but this was not the case in the United States.** Eight of every ten net new jobs in Canada during this period involved people who were self-employed. This compares to just one in ten net new jobs in the US. Over the entire period, self-employment in Canada increased 39%, while the number of paid employees rose only 2%. In the US, both self-employment and the number of paid employees grew at about the same rate (10%) over this period.

  BC's experience is somewhat different. Self-employment has expanded considerably more in this province (+51%) than in all of Canada (+39%) since 1989. While growth in self-employment has been a major factor underlying BC's employment growth since the late 1980s, it is not the only one. Five out of every ten net new jobs created in the province during this period involved paid employees rather than the self-employed, and the number of employees has increased 13%.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 71-005-XPB & BC STATS

Agriculture

- **Farmers in British Columbia received 3.7% more from sales of crops and livestock (and other cash receipts) in the third quarter of this year than in the same period of 1997.** Receipts from crop sales were up 9.0%, but livestock receipts shrank 0.5% as sales of poultry products declined. BC producers of tree fruits and berries have had a good year so far, with cash receipts increasing 11.5% year-to-date. However, sales of floriculture and nursery products–which account for about 40% of total crop sales–have fallen back, decreasing 8.8% from the first nine months of 1997. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC farmers appear to have escaped the malaise affecting farmers in other parts of Canada, where low wheat and hog prices have had devastating effects in some areas.** Third quarter receipts plunged 22.0% in Saskatchewan, and were down in Manitoba (-5.0%) and Alberta (-4.5%), largely due to sharply lower grain prices. Initial spring wheat prices set by the Canadian Wheat Board decreased from $172 per tonne at the end of the 1997 growing season to $130 this year, and durum prices have been cut almost in half (to $135). Quebec, Canada's biggest hog producer, posted a 5.7% decline in cash receipts. As a result of the downturn in the prairies and Quebec, Canadian cash receipts shrank 5.5%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Prices for animals and animal products edged up 0.5% between September and**

Did you know...?
Twenty-one percent of people with jobs in BC are employed part-time, more than in any other province. The national average is 19%.

October. Producers received more for cattle and calves for slaughter (+1.4%), but chicken prices were down 1.6%. Hog prices rose 3.2%, providing a faint ray of hope to Canadian producers who have faced sharply lower prices for hogs this year. Despite the improvement, hog prices remained at only two-thirds of last year's level. Overall, livestock prices were 7.0% lower than in October 1997.

Wheat prices also improved in October, increasing 13.5% over the previous month. Weather worries in Australia and the United States, other major wheat growing countries, put upward pressure on wheat prices, as did plans by the US for a food aid package to Russia.

Source: Statistics Canada

Park Usage

- **Unseasonably warm and sunny weather in October contributed to increased use in many provincial parks, particularly those in the Strathcona and Thompson River districts.** Year-to-date, the number of visits to provincial parks was 25.0 million, up from 22.5 million in 1997. Vancouver Island (+16%, to 6.0 million) and Thompson/Cariboo (+16%, to 3.0 million) posted the strongest gains. *Source: BC Parks*

Benefits of Pencils and Fax Machines

- **A 1997 study using West German data found that there is a significant wage premium for workers who use pencils on the job, or sit down while working (as long as they're not road crews).** A recent Statistics Canada study did not examine the use of pencils or seating arrangements, but found that there was a wage premium associated with the use of fax machines. In fact, there was a stronger correlation between wages and fax machine usage (with wage premiums ranging from 11% to 20%) than between wages and computer use (with premiums ranging from insignificant to about 14%). Likely reasons for the difference are not computing, faxing, or even pencil skills, but other unobserved abilities which may be either innate or the result of education and training.

Source: SC, Research Paper Series No. 126

Job Quality and Size of Firms

- **Between 1986 and 1997, workers in large firms earned wages that were 15% to 20% higher than those of workers in small firms.** In addition, workers in large firms were at least four times more likely than those in small firms to be covered by a pension plan. The gap between wages and pension benefits may be only partly due to the size of a firm, which affects its ability to pay for some of these benefits. Other considerations, such as the types of jobs available in small and large firms, almost certainly contribute to the wage gap. Workers in large firms were more likely to be shift workers, while those in smaller businesses were most likely to work more than five days a week. *Source: SC, The Daily*

The Nation

- **Canadian industrial product prices were up 0.7% in October, compared to a year earlier.** The effect of the exchange rate on export prices quoted in US dollars was the primary factor contributing to the increase. Excluding the exchange rate effect, industrial prices would have been down 2.4% from October 1997.

  On a month-to-month basis, industrial prices increased 0.7% between August and September, but would have declined 0.2% if the exchange rate had not worsened. Softwood lumber prices edged down 0.7% in October. Domestic prices fell 1.3%, but export prices, buoyed by the strong US dollar, were down 0.5%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canada's composite leading indicator edged up 0.1% between September and October, following two months of no change.** Six of the ten component indices were up, led by new orders for durable goods (+0.8%) and financial markets (the money supply was up 0.7%). Offsetting these increases was a decline in the TSE 300 stock price index (-4.2%), which was hampered by sharp declines earlier this year. However, the TSE is beginning to regain some of the ground it has lost since May. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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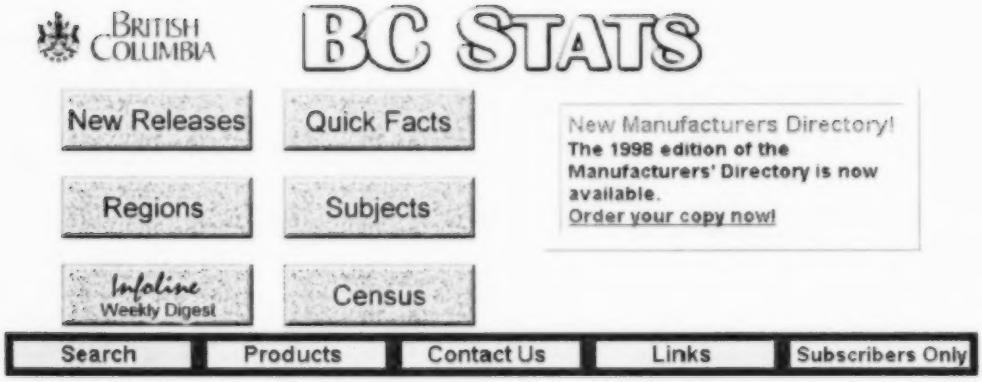

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Regions

Development Regions(8)

Regional Districts (28)

Municipalities (152)

Local Health Areas (102)

Provincial Electoral Districts (75)

Regional District Electoral Areas (164)

Subject Areas

Business

- High Technology
- Small Business
- Tourism

Data Services

- Custom Data Requests (priced)
- Standard Data Products (free)

Demographics

- Households
- Migration/Immigration
- Population
- Vital Measures

Economics

- Asia Pacific Issues
- BC Economic Accounts
- Exports & Imports

Labour

- Employment & Earnings (SLFH)
- Labour Force (LFS)

Social

- Income Assistance & Employment Insurance
- Socio Economic Indicators

General Information

- Census
- Financial & Economic Review
- Geography & Maps
- How to Research a Business Plan
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Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	4,014.3	1.3
Canada	30,300.4	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Sep	2,864	1.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Sep	2,217	3.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	2,765	-2.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Oct '98	% change on one year ago
BC	110.1	0.4
Canada	109.0	1.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct '98	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,047	1.4
Employed - BC	1,883	2.4
Unemployed - BC	164	-8.9
		Oct '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.0	8.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.1	9.1
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Nov 25/98	Nov 26/97
Prime Business Rate	6.75	5.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.40	5.65
- 5 year	7.15	6.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Nov 25/98	Nov 26/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5445	1.4248
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6475	0.7019
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '98	% change on one year ago
BC	619.56	1.0
Canada	603.24	0.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

On-line searching of Infoline (and more)

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Please let us know what you think.

A note on the identification of "found" items on our site. We have been working hard to properly identify all the files on our site, but many items still bear file names rather than proper titles. We decided to give you the advantage of the new features as soon as they were ready and continue our renaming efforts as time permits.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Business Indicators, November 1998
- Current Statistics, November 1998
- Exports, September 1998

Next week

- Immigration Highlights, First 3 Quarters, 1998

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